

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8628

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 6336

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CENTO

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD CENTO

1. ON AUGUST 17, LIEUTENANT GENERAL AKRAM, PAKISTAN'S PERMANENT MILITARY DEPUTY (PMD) TO CENTO, ADVISED THE US PMD THAT PAKISTAN WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE FORTHCOMING US-HOSTED CENTO VISIT TO THE US (SEPTEMBER 15-27). THE US PMD WAS FURTHER INFORMED THAT PAKISTAN WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE US-HOSTED CENTO SEMINAR IN NAPLES IN OCTOBER.

2. PAKISTAN PREVIOUSLY DECLINED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO A US HOSTED SEMINAR, CENTO AIR DEFENSE COORDINATION CONFERENCE AND PMD VISIT TO US AIRBASES IN GERMANY, JUNE 26-JULY 2. PREVIOUS PAKISTANI REJECTIONS OF NATO-HOSTED EVENTS INVOLVED DISPLAY DETERMINATION 1976 AND A JOINT US/NATO PMD VISIT TO AFSOUTH IN NAPLES. WHILE PAKISTAN HAD MADE
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KNOWN ITS DISINTEREST IN ATTENDING ANY NATO-SPONSORED EVENTS, IT HAS NOT PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED THE SAME POLICY FOR US-HOSTED EVENTS. THE MILITARY TAKEOVER BY GENRAL ZIA UL-HAQ HAS, HOWEVER NOT ALTERED THE PATTERN OF REJECTION OF US INVITATIONS.

3. THE US ELEMENT IN CENTO ENJOYS ENTIRE TO PAKISTAN UNDER

NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT THE US PMD WILL NOT BE INVITED TO VISIT PAKISTAN DURING THE ANNUAL VISIT IN JANUARY 1978. US PMD'S, LIEUTENANT GENERAL BREET, AND NOW LIEUTENANT GENERAL TACKABERRY, HAVE TAKEN NO OFFICIAL NOTICE OF PAKISTAN'S REFUSALS EXCEPT TO OFFER REGRETS THAT THE MILITARY OFFICERS COULD NOT BENEFIT FROM US EVENTS. PRIVATELY THEY HAVE COMMISERATED WITH GENERAL AKRAM AND HIS COLLEAGUES. THE US PMD DESIRES AND PLANS TO KEEP OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.

4. PAKISTANIS IN CENTO GENERALLY DEPLORE THEIR GOVERNMENT'S REFUSAL TO PERMIT MILITARY OFFICERS TO SHARE IN US-HOSTED CENTO ACTIVITIES AND NATO EXERCISES. GENERAL AKRAM IS PERSONALLY WARM AND COURTEOUS IN HIS RELATIONS WITH US PERSONNEL, AND AFTER THE COUP HE PREDICTED AN EVENTUAL END TO THE POLICY OF PAKISTANI NON-PARTICIPATION. AKRAM MAY HAVE BEEN TOO SANGUINE ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF ALTERNING THE BHUTTO POLICY OF REMAINING ALOOF FROM US-HOSTED EVENTS. HOWEVER, ON AUGUST 23, PAKISTAN OFFERED ONE AIR/GROUND RANGE FOR USE BY US AIRCRAFT DURING A CENTO EXERCISE. ALSO, PAKISTAN IS PERMITTING PORT VISITS AT KARACHI IN EARLY NOVEMBER OF A US CARRIER AND DESTROYER.

5. COMMENT: THESE CONFLICTING INDICATORS CONFUSE THE ACTUAL EXTENT OF PAKISTAN'S DISAFFECTION WITH THE US IN ITS CENTO ROLE. WE WOULD SUPPOSE IT IS POSSIBLE, CONFIDENTIAL

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FOR EXAMPLE, THAT GENERAL ZIA WAS RELUCTANT TO ALTER THE GOP'S TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO PARTICIPATION IN US-HOSTED AND NATO EVENTS SO AS NOT TO PROVOKE REACTIONS FROM THE COMPETING PARTIES DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. WE ARE NONETHELESS CONCERNED THAT A FURTHER DECLINE IN PAKISTAN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ORGANIZATION WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IN ITSELF AND MIGHT EVENTUALLY HELP LEAD TO PAKISTAN'S WITHDRAWAL FROM CENTO. IRAN'S ATTITUDE IS ALSO OF CONCERN. WHILE IRANIAN PARTICIPATION IN CENTO CONTINUES AT A NORMAL LEVEL, THAT COUNTRY HAS NOT CHOSEN TO FILL THE VACANT POST OF CENTO SECRETARY-GENERAL, ALLOWING ITS TURN TO PASS TO TURKEY. IF PAKISTAN WERE TO QUIT THE ALLIANCE THE FEAR AMONG SOME OBSERVERS HERE IS THAT IRAN MIGHT SOON FOLLOW SUIT.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD WELCOME COMMENTS AND ANALYSES FROM EMBASSIES ISLAMABAD AND TEHRAN. SPIERS

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